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(Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 12th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 19 October 2005, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Gujadhur (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Mauritius)

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In the absence of Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan), Mr. Gujadhur (Mauritius), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 29: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*) (A/60/20 and Corr.1)

1. **Mr. Loedel** (Uruguay), speaking on behalf of MERCOSUR and its associated States, said that, since space technology played an essential role in the life of mankind, it was important to develop space law and ethics on the peaceful uses of outer space. The international community must commit itself to the peaceful and rational use of outer space, which was the common heritage of mankind, for the development and well-being of current and future generations. Regrettably, despite the progress that had been made in the area of space technology, much of the world's population still did not benefit from, or was not even aware of, the potential of such technology.

2. In order to ensure that outer space was used for peaceful purposes, taking into account, in particular, the needs of the developing countries, the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) must be implemented, and international space law, including treaties relating to the practical peaceful applications of space science and technology, should be further developed.

3. It was particularly important to implement the UNISPACE III recommendations regarding universal access to space-based communication services, the use of space technology for sustainable development, innovative funding mechanisms and the execution of experimental projects. He welcomed the identification by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of priority areas such as disaster management, tele-education and telemedicine, environmental protection, the management of natural resources, and education and training, including research in basic space sciences and space law. He also stressed the importance of the work of the Legal Subcommittee and of the existing international treaties relating to outer space.

4. It was important to promote the establishment of regional cooperation and coordination mechanisms and he welcomed the establishment in 2002, at the Fourth Space Conference of the Americas, of a regional space cooperation and coordination body. MERCOSUR and its associated countries looked forward to the Fifth Space Conference of the Americas to be held in Ecuador in 2006. Those conferences were examples of peaceful cooperation among nations in ensuring that space technology benefited all mankind, without distinction between developed and developing countries.

5. **Mr. Song** Se Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) stressed that outer space was a common possession of humankind and should not be the exclusive possession of any one State; its exploration should contribute to the well-being of all humankind. Member States must therefore oppose the monopolization of outer space and ensure that the wide-ranging applications of space science and technology were shared by all. Any attempt to prevent the developing countries from sharing in the exploration of outer space could not be tolerated.

6. Member States should oppose the militarization of outer space; his delegation condemned any attempt to militarize outer space, for example through the development of a missile defence system, in order to prevent an arms race in space, preserve world peace and ensure the peaceful exploration of outer space. A binding international legal regime was needed to prevent the militarization of outer space. His Government would actively promote cooperation with the international community, including the United Nations and other States, to ensure the peaceful uses of outer space and would independently develop space science and technology.

7. **Mr. Mahajan** (India) welcomed the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Thailand as new members of the Committee on the Peaceful uses of Outer Space (COPUOS).

8. Recent natural disasters and their attendant human tragedies were reminders of the urgent need for an integrated global disaster management system. Disaster management was one of several priority themes covered in the United Nations Programme on Space Applications that were of the utmost importance to the developing countries. His delegation supported the recommendation of the action team on disaster management concerning the establishment of an international space coordination organization for disaster management, and hoped that its functions

would be organized under the umbrella of the United Nations in order to ensure universal access. Welcoming the ongoing interest of the Legal Subcommittee in the draft protocol on matters specific to space assets to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment, he noted that Member States held widely varying views as to whether the United Nations should act as the supervisory authority for the protocol.

9. His country had always endeavoured to put the latest space technology at the service of its most deprived people and to that end the following programmes had been undertaken over the past year. An exhibition, "India in Space", had been organized during the forty-eighth session of COPUOS; it illustrated how a developing country could use space technology to alleviate social and economic conditions at home and abroad. The first operational launch of the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle had taken place on 20 September 2004, and the satellite, EDUSAT, was dedicated exclusively to supporting satellite-based educational networks nationwide. The ninth operational launch of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle had taken place on 5 May 2005; that satellite interacted with two other satellites with applications in cartography and amateur radio operation. In addition to the remote-sensing applications programme, the Indian Space Research Organization was pursuing three new programmes covering tele-education, telemedicine and village resource centres (VRC). An International Telemedicine Conference organized in Bangalore in March 2005 had been attended by 550 delegates from 40 countries. The VRC pilot project based on interactive VSAT-based networks had been inaugurated in October 2004. There was great scope for its application in a country with some 600,000 villages, and initial results had been very encouraging.

10. International cooperation, particularly South-South cooperation, was an important component of India's space programme. A connectivity mission had been launched during the year between India and the countries of the African Union, under which 53 nations would be linked through a satellite and fibre-optic network, a project which was currently being studied by the African Union. In addition to effective communication and connectivity between nations, the link would give rural connectivity to the Pan-African Union, thus providing democratic access and empowerment.

11. India had been an active member of COPUOS since its inception and participated in a variety of global cooperative programmes. It was a member of the International Charter "Space and Major Disasters", hosted a Mission Control Centre for the international search and rescue satellite system, and supported the United Nations-affiliated Centre for Space Science and Technology Education for Asia and the Pacific, based in Dehradun and Ahmedabad. Since 1995 it had provided some $5 million for infrastructure and it had funded an annual recurring expenditure of $1 million in kind and direct grants-in-aid.

12. **Mr. Gidor** (Israel) said that Israel was extremely proud of its work in the field of space exploration, shared the United Nations objectives of securing, promoting and broadening the peaceful use of outer space, and had held COPUOS observer status since February 2003. Space-related activities corresponding to the stated agenda of COPUOS included the work of the Israeli Space Agency (ISA), established in 1983 within the framework of the Ministry of Science and Technology.

13. In September 1988, Israel had launched the satellite OFEQ-1 by means of the SHAVIT launcher. Both the satellite and the launcher were advanced technological products developed in Israel, which had thus become one of the few nations currently capable of producing, launching, and operating its own satellites. A new line of commercial satellites named EROS (Earth Remote Observation System), which had been developed in collaboration with a United States company, had been launched in December 2000. AMOS, the Israeli geostationary satellite for the Middle East and Eastern Europe, had been launched on a European Ariane-4 launcher in May 1996, and a scientific micro-satellite TECHSAT had been launched from a ZENITH platform in July 1998. There were currently five Israeli-made satellites orbiting the Earth.

14. The focus of Israeli research was in certain niches — in particular small sophisticated satellites, space propulsion, global positioning systems for ground applications and satellite-based technologies such as remote sensing — and in building cost-effective infrastructure.

15. The aims of the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development were not only laudable but achievable. Recent natural disasters had demonstrated that greater efforts must be urgently deployed to

promote understanding of the environment, and Israel had played an active role in international cooperation to that end by initiating a series of research programmes.

16. His delegation wholeheartedly and actively supported the Committee's quest to develop solutions for various water-resource problems. As part of his country's policy of collaborating with other leading space-exploring nations, the Israeli Space Agency had recently signed an agreement with its French counterpart, under which a research mission would come into operation by the end of 2008 within the framework of the European Global Monitoring for Environmental and Security programme (GMES programme). The mission would be aimed at demonstrating the efficiency of optimized multi-spectral observation and would be known as the Vegetation and Environment Monitoring New Micro-Satellite (VENUS). VENUS would cover 50 representative sites in 12 spectral bands every other day, and its research was intended to contribute to the monitoring of water quality and the improvement of the representation of terrestrial surfaces in meteorology, climate and carbon models.

17. Two months earlier Israel had joined "Galileo", the European Global Navigation System. It had initiated a leading research project on dust storms designed to promote international monitoring of climate change and emerging natural disasters. It had officially signed cooperation agreements with sister agencies from the United States of America, France, Canada, Germany, the Russian Federation, India, Ukraine and the Netherlands, and looked forward to signing similar agreements in the near future with agencies from Chile, Brazil and the Republic of Korea.

18. **Mr. Gebreel** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that his country had devised a policy for incorporating space-related technology in development projects to resolve the problems it faced, particularly desertification and the scarcity of water in the region. The Libyan Remote-Sensing Centre, which had been set up in 1999 to follow up international developments in that field, was a member of numerous committees and associations, both national and international. It worked tirelessly in the field of space sciences and had recently organized the celebration of World Space Week.

19. Despite the progress that had been achieved, the world remained powerless in the face of environmental threats and challenges; successive disasters had confirmed the urgent need to promote international cooperation in the use of outer space for peaceful purposes in order to prevent them and mitigate their effects. In that connection, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had recently hosted the first international conference on the safety of the seas and oceans under the auspices of the Gaddafi International Foundation for Charity Associations. The agenda of the conference had included the establishment of a disaster early warning system. In that connection, his delegation supported the idea of setting up an international body to provide emergency disaster relief.

20. His delegation appreciated the role played by the developed countries and the progress that had been achieved, but he called on decision makers in those countries to assist the developing countries to acquire modern technology in accordance with the principle of "space for all". In that connection, an international system should be established to enable all States, irrespective of their scientific and social advancement, to make use of space technology and to participate in the sustainable development of the developing countries and in the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

21. His delegation supported what had been said by earlier speakers on the progress that had been achieved in the codification of activities in outer space but pointed out that there remained many areas that needed to be regulated by law. He called on the international community to conclude agreements and promulgate international and national legislation to ensure the utilization of outer space for peaceful purposes. His delegation also called on all States to avoid any activity that might lead to the militarization of space, that would be detrimental to the environment of the planet and to the peace and security of its inhabitants.

22. **Mr. Ahmad** (Pakistan) stressed the importance of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, the benefits of which should be shared by all the peoples of the world. Recalling General Assembly resolution 59/116, he supported the call by the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space for continued international cooperation in identifying new areas for the application of space science and technologies for sustainable development.

23. Continued progress in the application of space technology would contribute to economic, social and cultural development and promote the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It was essential, however, that developing countries should be active participants through the sharing of experiences and technologies, timely access to data and information at a reasonable cost, and capacity-building in the use of space technology.

24. His delegation had always attached great importance to space-based disaster management support, the importance of which had been underscored by the severe natural disasters that had occurred in the past 12 months and most recently by the earthquake that had struck south Asia, in particular his own country. An immediate satellite survey of the area of the earthquake might have provided a quicker assessment of the magnitude of the devastation. It was urgent therefore to ensure a more efficient use of space technology for the prediction, monitoring and mitigation of natural disasters. He supported the work of the ad hoc expert group on the possibility of creating an international entity to provide for coordination of space-based services for use in disaster management.

25. He expressed concern that increasing military activities in space were affecting international cooperation in the peaceful exploration and applications of outer space. The States with major space capabilities had a greater responsibility to contribute actively to the prevention of the militarization of outer space. A comprehensive convention would promote that objective. In the meantime, the existing agreements should be properly implemented. Given that the peaceful and military uses of outer space were inseparable, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the Conference on Disarmament should coordinate their efforts and strengthen their working relationship. The Conference on Disarmament could benefit significantly from the expertise of COPUOS on issues relating to outer space and space technology. He therefore appealed to States which advocated a limited role for the Committee to cooperate with other delegations in order to bring about a solution acceptable to all concerned and he called on the scientific community to strengthen international cooperation to preserve outer space for peaceful purposes.

26. He welcomed the continued implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III and noted that his delegation had chaired the Working Group of the Whole of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. At the regional level, his Government had organized a workshop on the monitoring and protection of the natural environment, jointly sponsored by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, the Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), the Swedish International Cooperation Development Agency (SIDA) and the University of Stockholm.

27. At the national level, great progress had been made towards the application of space science and technology, including the use of satellite remote-sensing data to develop national land use maps to help to assess the national ecosystem with a view to ensuring the sustainable development of agriculture and forestry and minimizing land degradation. Other projects included the development of geographic information systems (GIS) to assist the state oil company in real-time monitoring of retail sales outlets and security alerts; a vehicle tracking system for crime prevention; and air quality assessment in major cities. As a result of the latter study, cleaner fuels such as compressed natural gas (CNG) and cleaner technologies for industries were being promoted.

28. **Mr. Adekanye** (Nigeria) welcomed the fact that the recent World Summit had recognized the important role that science and technology could play in promoting sustainable development. His delegation took note with satisfaction of the work of COPUOS during the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, that had been the first time that the General Assembly itself had organized a plenary session on the role of space technology in human affairs. In furtherance of the UNISPACE III recommendations, his delegation was pleased that COPUOS would be working with the Commission on Sustainable Development by contributing to the thematic areas to be addressed by the Commission. As chair of Action Team 11 on the Application of the Results of Space Research in Sustainable Development, his delegation would continue its work on sustainable development within the Committee and also support the work of the other action teams.

29. As part of its contribution to sustainable development efforts globally, and particularly in Africa, Nigeria, in collaboration with South Africa and Algeria, was organizing the first African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology for

Sustainable Development in Africa, which would serve as a forum to increase awareness in African countries of the need to develop interest in space science and technology and to participate in the work of COPUOS. It believed that the outcome of the conference would enhance the programmes of the science and technology priority areas of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

30. In the light of the pain and suffering experienced by all countries affected by disasters within the past 12 months, his delegation fully supported the proposed establishment of the Disaster Management International Space Coordinating Organization (DMISCO) to promote the application of space technology in disaster reduction and management on the global scale. Nigeria had contributed to the study on the feasibility of establishing DMISCO, and commended the ad hoc expert group for its work on it.

31. As a member of the Disaster Monitoring Constellation, his country had been providing effective services to users globally in the management of disasters, by means of its satellite NigeriaSat-1, and, through the Constellation, it had finalized its proposal to join the International Charter "Space and Major Disasters".

32. The issue of space and water was an important one that COPUOS should continue to address. As one of the primary beneficiaries of Lake Chad, the shrinking of which ranked as one of Africa's most severe water crises, Nigeria supported initiatives aimed at restoring water to the Lake.

33. His delegation noted with satisfaction the efforts of the Committee to develop a series of legal instruments for human exploration and the peaceful uses of outer space, and recognized the efforts of the Legal Subcommittee to review those instruments. It was therefore pleased that the Office for Outer Space Affairs, with the support of the Committee, had started, three years earlier, to provide opportunities for developing countries to build and enhance their knowledge of space law through space law workshops. Nigeria was pleased to be hosting one such workshop between 21 and 24 November 2005; it would provide an opportunity to introduce space law to legal practitioners from Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa.

34. He welcomed the fact that, in consideration of its future role and activities, COPUOS had agreed that it was important to consider the evolution of space activities and how the Committee could develop a long-term plan to enhance international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. His delegation was pleased to note that the issue would be on the agenda of the Committee during its forty-ninth session, and it looked forward to making its own contributions to the attainment of that goal.

35. **Mr. Yamamoto** (Japan) described some of the significant space-related activities that had taken place in his country in the past year. The Council for Science and Technology Policy of Japan, chaired by the Prime Minister, had adopted a report entitled "Basic Strategy of Japan for the Development and Use of Space", which provided a framework for Japan's space development programme for the coming decade. It placed the highest priority on ensuring technological reliability and on sustaining, developing and strengthening fundamental technologies. Furthermore, it listed three objectives: to ensure national security, to develop the economy and improve the quality of life of the country's citizens, and to increase scientific knowledge and promote sustainable development for humanity.

36. He was pleased to announce that the reliability of the H-IIA launch vehicle had been demonstrated by the successful launching in February 2005 of H-IIA Launch Vehicle No. 7, which had successfully placed the Multi-functional Transport Satellite-1 Replacement into orbit, where it would perform meteorological observations and air traffic control functions in the East Asia and Western Pacific regions.

37. As an active participant in the International Space Station programme, Japan welcomed the successful completion of the space shuttle mission (STS-114), which an astronaut from the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency had joined as a mission specialist. It hoped that the results of that mission would contribute to the steady progress of the programme.

38. Noting that environmental degradation and large-scale disasters were among the most serious concerns of the international community, he said that Japan, which had been a co-chair of the ad hoc Group on Earth Observations, had actively contributed to the development of the 10-year implementation plan of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems, which had been endorsed at the third Earth Observation Summit in Brussels in February 2005. Japan was currently participating in the Group as a member of the

Executive Committee and had offered to co-chair the Architecture and Data Committee, which discussed all architecture and data management aspects of the design, coordination and implementation of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems. It was also promoting the development and operation of satellite data information systems that would facilitate the use of satellite data in such activities as Earth observations, disaster monitoring and resource management. Indeed, one of the further planned launches for H-IIA would serve to place the Advanced Land Observing Satellite into orbit. That satellite was expected to provide data for the creation of a hazard map and the prompt detection of disaster threats. Other projects in the field included the development of the Greenhouse Gas Observing Satellite and Global Precipitation Measurement/Dual-frequency Precipitation Radar.

39. In 1992, Japan had taken the initiative of establishing the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum, and had just hosted its twelfth session. The participants in that session had adopted recommendations relating to the strengthening of international cooperation towards the establishment of a disaster risk management system; further coordination among countries of the Asia-Pacific region to promote the utilization of the Japanese Experiment Module in the International Space Station; and the strengthening of the capability of the Asia-Pacific region to use and benefit from space science and technology and their applications.

40. Japan had also hosted the recent United Nations/International Astronautical Federation Workshop on Space Education and Capacity Building for Sustainable Development, the object of which was to review educational and capacity-building initiatives carried out by various entities and to seek ways to build synergies among them. Furthermore, Japan was currently hosting the Fifty-sixth International Astronautical Congress, during which the space agencies of Japan, Canada, Europe and the United States had agreed to establish the International Space Education Board.

41. Space was a common frontier for all mankind, offering infinite possibilities. It was important to look beyond national borders to help to bring the benefits derived from space activities not only to the citizens of the countries engaged in space activities but to people all over the world. Japan was committed to working towards prosperity for humanity by engaging in international space activities, in the hope that such cooperative efforts would result in benefits for all.

42. **Mr. Jean** (Burkina Faso) recalled that several speakers in the general debate in the General Assembly in September 2005 had called for the non-militarization of outer space. That same call had recently been reiterated in the First Committee in relation to disarmament and international security issues. In particular, the statements made by the representatives of China and the Russian Federation were to be welcomed.

43. Military objectives benefited only a small number of States, but the use of outer space for peaceful purposes was critical to development. Indeed, many reports of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, notably the most recent report (A/60/20), confirmed the degree to which space science and technology contributed to sustainable development.

44. Satellites capable of collecting and distributing data on the state of the atmosphere, oceans, soils, climate, Earth and the space environment provided long-term and high-quality ecological measurements for monitoring natural disasters, including floods, typhoons and droughts, as well as for meteorological forecasting. In addition, remote-sensing techniques had contributed extensively to the improvement of methods of forecasting and the collection of data, both in the environmental sphere and in the identification of indicators for water management. In health and education, telemedicine and tele-education considerably facilitated access to the latest information and programmes. Furthermore, geostationary satellites had brought about a genuine revolution in telecommunications, navigation and air transportation.

45. Burkina Faso had been a member of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space since 1980 and was currently serving as Second Vice-Chairman/Rapporteur. Like most developing countries, it derived considerable advantages, via international cooperation, from the positive spin-offs of space technology. For example, under the TIGER initiative, Canada was financing a project for assessing the water resources of river basins, based on Earth observation data. Another project initiated by the West Africa Regional Office of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature focused on the improvement of water resource management in the Volta basin. In the health sector, France was implementing a project for

epidemiological surveillance of infectious diseases; components of that project included the installation of a monitoring facility in the area where meningitis was prevalent, and a pilot project to establish an inventory of surface water in the basin of the Nakambé river, using remote-sensing techniques. Those projects demonstrated that the application of space technologies for peaceful purposes did not benefit only the developed countries.

46. Enhanced international cooperation at all levels would no doubt make it possible for other States to take advantage of space technologies. The existence of the International Space Station, or of the Global Navigation Satellite System demonstrated clearly that space technology responded to the concerns of all States.

47. His delegation commended the Committee for the efforts it was making under the auspices of the United Nations to establish regional training centres in space sciences and engineering in India, Morocco, Nigeria, Brazil and Mexico. The transfer of technology and knowledge offered the best guarantee of cooperation on an international scale.

48. Given the multiple challenges facing all of humanity, it was essential to adopt an international legal instrument on the peaceful uses of outer space. A much higher level of attention needed to be devoted to environmental issues. The occurrence of multiple natural disasters, notably the tsunami in Indonesia and hurricane Katrina in Florida, as well as the recent earthquake in Pakistan, had demonstrated cruelly to the world that no country was safe from disaster.

49. The establishment of an international system of disaster prevention and management, as recommended by the Committee at its forty-eighth session, held in Vienna in June 2005, was a matter of urgency. Such a system would no doubt make it possible not only to deal more effectively with disasters that were an obstacle to development, but also to save thousands of human lives.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.